

CALIFORNIA TECHNOLOGY AGENCY

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Dear GIS Community:

The State is at an exciting time with regard to geospatial technology. Location based initiatives and technology have progressed to a point where we have more functionality readily available than we ever have had in the past. Data access is easier, more efficient and more tangible for a widening audience of users, most of which are non-GIS professionals who have a growing interest in how geography impacts their lives. We see this with increased adoption rates of web based mapping capabilities offered by organizations like Google, Microsoft and many other consumer based geospatial providers. To put this into perspective, one billion unique users worldwide have downloaded Google Earth. That's nearly 15% of the Earth's population. I think it is safe to say that interest in location based information and geo-literacy is on the rise and will only continue to grow in the future.

California's ability to meet the geospatial demands of government, business and its 38 million citizens will be put to the test in the coming years, as our collective audience becomes more and more dependent on location based information. In preparation for this challenge, we are moving forward with the development of a new approach to understanding our geospatial data portfolio statewide. This will create efficiencies with regard to how we manage data, become more cost effective in how we fund data purchases, more collaborative in sharing data and will ultimately give us the opportunity to better serve one another and those who trust us with the important task of mapping California's diverse features and resources.

The open source GeoPortal Toolkit has been chosen for the statewide GeoPortal. The Geographic Information Systems Division within the California Technology Agency will host and maintain the GeoPortal. This portal platform provides flexibility that will allow us to efficiently manage, collect and disseminate geospatial data resources to our stakeholder communities like it has never been done before. The GeoPortal will be easy and intuitive to use, secure and customizable. We will initiate a series of JAD (Joint Application Development) sessions in late March and early April to begin the needs/development portion of the contract. These sessions will provide the GIS community with the opportunity to bring their organizational needs to the meeting, for incorporation into the statewide GeoPortal.

The GeoPortal is a tool that will integrate into existing workflows that GIS professionals are already accustomed to using. We recognize the importance for the GeoPortal to not disrupt or distract GIS professionals from their important work by requiring them to access a non-geospatial tool for data discovery, management and dissemination. Therefore, the GeoPortal will allow users to access content from within desktop GIS applications without having to login to another system entirely. We know from experience that discovering and downloading data from external sources can be time consuming and arduous at best.

Geospatial data management and discovery are two primary functions of the GeoPortal. It is developed to allow users to search, discover and disseminate geospatial content based on geographic location and geographic data types. This opens up a whole new world of possibility to GIS professionals because it is

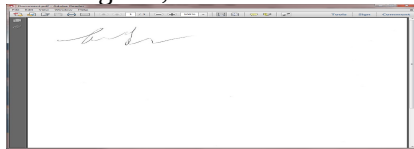
a tool that is built and developed to take into account their needs, and not the general needs of people interested in finding data.

The GeoPortal also has a metadata tool built into it. Validation of metadata can occur for both newly created or newly registered data. I think this will take us down the road of better documentation of our data and it will lower the barrier to make this possible because the tool will be part of the portal itself.

The GeoPortal will also allow us to search in a federated manner across the State, Local, Federal and non-profit areas for data discovery. Within the GeoPortal, there are tools that will allow us to search the open web, social media and other various stores of information to discover and leverage content for the work we do. The GeoPortal will also integrate with existing metadata repositories at other State agencies. Metadata stores and portals like CalAtlas, DWR's GeoPortal and the Department of Parks and Recreation's GeoPortal, will be available to be searched to discover geospatial content. Approaching our data portfolio in this manner is more efficient and cost effective.

Lastly, deploying a GeoPortal gives GIS an identity in the State. Throughout my career, I have observed GIS being overshadowed by other technologies. Many people do not realize the importance of geospatial relationships to their daily lives; whether it is work or recreation, everything starts with a place or a location. This portal will be the critical centerpiece of California's GIS program, highlighting the invaluable work accomplished daily by a very intelligent and dedicated GIS community. The time has come for California's collective GIS program to rally around a focal point, a common platform for data sharing and discovery. Embracing the GeoPortal is an opportunity for us to increase collaboration, provide efficient communication of geospatial needs and improve our data management practices. I am excited about the promise 2012 holds for the GIS community and I look forward to working with you to make the statewide GeoPortal a reality.

Best Regards,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be "Scott Gregory".

SCOTT GREGORY
State Geographic Information Officer
California Technology Agency